



WPS Focal Points Network 5th Capital-Level Meeting
6-9 June 2023, Washington, D.C.
Joint Communiqué

We, the Members of the Women, Peace and Security Focal Points Network, the “WPS Focal Points Network”, representing Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Central African Republic, Chile, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Guatemala, Indonesia, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Mali, Malta, Mexico, Moldova, Mongolia, Namibia, Netherlands, Norway, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States, Uruguay, the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), European Union (EU), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the Organization of American States (OAS) present in Washington, D.C., United States of America from 6 to 9 June 2023 for the 5th Capital-Level Meeting of the Network, hosted by the United States of America and Romania as the 2023 Co-Chairs of the Network, in partnership with UN Women as the Secretariat of the Network, and with the additional participation of women peacebuilders, parliamentarians and legislators from 29 countries;

Welcome the meeting theme on *“Advancing the adaptability and evolution of WPS as a framework for implementing policy change”* with the 2023 Co-Chair priorities to 1) Advance the shared solidarity and expectations of the national Focal Points through developing the role and responsibilities of WPS Focal Points; 2) Adjust WPS efforts and actions to meet global requirements through a national focus on WPS and continued support for WPS National Action Plan (NAP) implementation through resource-sharing and training; and 3) Increase/improve the adaptability and evolution of WPS to advance an inclusive approach and address intersectional power dynamics including through engaging with the expertise of Network members and Focal Points for coordinating on existing and future WPS Centers of Excellence;

Welcome the growth of the Network to 100 members, making this the largest cross-regional forum of UN Member States and regional organizations sharing experiences, good practices and solidarity to advance action to implement all ten Security Council resolutions on WPS, in partnership with civil society, academia, the private sector, parliamentarians, and local women's rights organizations;

Welcome the affirmation of the Leaders of the Group of Seven (G7) at their 2023 annual summit in Hiroshima to “commit to advancing, implementing and strengthening the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda including its application to disaster risk reduction (DRR), through partnership with the WPS Focal Points Network and support for National Action Plan development, and to promote intersectional approaches.”

Reaffirm the centrality of the WPS agenda and diverse women’s leadership to international and national peace and security and the prevention and resolution of wars and conflicts, as inter- and intra- state armed conflicts, humanitarian crises, gender-based violence, food insecurity, climate-related disasters and pandemics continue to have disproportionate impacts on women, girls, marginalized communities, and populations in vulnerable situations across regions;

Condemn the rollback on women’s human rights across the world, including related to the restriction of women’s freedom of movement and their ability to participate fully in peace processes, the perpetration of gender-based violence and reprisals against women, and limited accountability and inadequate access to justice for these acts;

Affirm that WPS NAPs and relevant human rights legislation and strategies are integral to WPS implementation, and congratulate the 107 UN Member States and territories that have adopted NAPs and their ongoing efforts to keep their NAPs current;

Welcome the engagement during this meeting with parliamentarians and legislators and take note of discussions to further strengthen WPS implementation through increased collaboration with WPS Focal Points and WPS leads, experts, policymakers, civil society leaders, and diverse sectors, to consider tools such as legislation where appropriate, WPS budgets, and robust monitoring and reporting processes;

Commit to implementing previous WPS Focal Points Network meeting communiqués and recommendations, as relevant, and highlight the following:

The Role and Responsibilities of WPS Focal Points

Recognizing that the role of a WPS Focal Point is understood, titled and defined differently in various contexts, and considering calls for the need for guidance that outlines the range of roles and responsibilities of WPS Focal Points, and which draws from the practices and experiences of Network members, *we recommend*:

- the development of a guidance document for the Network that outlines skills, qualifications, mandates, tasks and resources to inform the role of a WPS focal point to support increased coordination and monitoring on WPS within governments and organizations, bolster NAP adoption and implementation, and where relevant, WPS strategies and CEDAW General recommendation no. 30, to advance the global WPS agenda;

- the provision of comprehensive support from Member States and Regional Organizations to their respective WPS Focal Point or WPS lead, including human and financial resources to carry out their roles and responsibilities, such as targeted training and capacity building initiatives to effectively support implementation of WPS normative frameworks, policies and initiatives;
- support the institutionalization of the WPS Focal Point role within Member States and Regional Organizations and to ensure that WPS Focal Point responsibilities enable and support coordination of a whole-of-government approach, in partnership with civil society and local leaders and women’s rights organizations, and the application of WPS in ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ security interventions and peace processes.

National Action Plan Implementation

Recognizing that National Action Plan adoption does not always result in transformative WPS implementation, and noting the need for targeted action and resources for more effective implementation, *we recommend*:

- that parliamentarians and policymakers advocate for and support the full implementation of the WPS agenda to promote inclusive and comprehensive approaches to peace and security, nationally and internationally, and to promote monitoring and reporting across government, WPS capacity strengthening, and adequate financing for WPS NAPs, policies, and initiatives;
- that civil society, including but not limited to women with disabilities, young women, Indigenous women, religious leaders, and the media, is recognized as critical partners in coordinating, developing, implementing and monitoring WPS NAPs, and that localization is seen as a critical strategy to implement the WPS agenda and to address the needs and to promote the rights of local women peacebuilders and members of local communities, ensuring diversity, equity and inclusion;
- that the structure of NAPs and funding mechanisms remain flexible to respond to crises and emerging issues, where relevant, including those related to climate change, cybersecurity, technological advancement and accessibility, trafficking, preventing and countering violent extremism (PVE/CVE), pandemics and health emergencies, food and economic insecurity, and space security, and that aligning NAPs and integrating the WPS agenda with other plans and policies and human rights instruments, is critical to comprehensively address the interconnected challenges to peace and security, to avoid duplication of efforts and support partnerships, and to enable cost-sharing.

WPS Sustainability & WPS Centers of Excellence

Noting that this year will mark the 23rd anniversary of UN Security Council resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) (2000) and taking note of the prevailing need to strengthen political will to match WPS normative commitments with sustained action, as well as to expand the knowledge and evidence base on WPS to address current challenges and coordinate with existing efforts to enact transformative change through knowledge-sharing efforts such as WPS centers of excellence, *we recommend:*

- increased focus on the prevention pillar of UNSCR 1325 and the underlying causes of conflict, violence, and discrimination, and investment in arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament and a range of human security interventions such as access to quality and safe education for all women and girls, creating economic opportunities for women and championing gender equality and women's leadership in all sectors of society, fostering social inclusion, preventing and responding to gender-based violence, and protecting and promoting women's and girls' human rights;
- adequate financial allocations, including, where appropriate and subject to the availability of funds, dedicated budgets for government ministries, departments, and agencies to implement the WPS agenda, and the provision of flexible, long-term financing to women peacebuilders and civil society organizations working on WPS, particularly those that are women-led;
- a context-specific regional and multi-sectoral approach to facilitate the easy access and availability of cutting edge and practical WPS knowledge products and research, technical expertise, and resources to advance WPS efforts, in collaboration with existing initiatives, mechanisms, knowledge/research centers, and further exploring engagement with existing and future WPS centers of excellence, to ensure sustainability of the WPS agenda by addressing diverse issues and engaging expertise from a variety of sectors and actors.

We urge Member States and regional organizations, who have not yet done so, to adopt and implement WPS action plans and strategies, and to join the WPS Focal Points Network.